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unless stooped by age. Hands seldom gloved in winter are rough and dirty and calloused. I often thought that one of the strangest things about death was the way it quieted the hands of these simple folk, who, although reserved in demeanor, constantly gestured when they spoke.

I grew accustomed to the mannerisms of the people as well as to the flavor of village life by slow degrees. At first I was attracted most by the gala occasions, or the spectacular. There was the annual Christmas *horo* (folk dance) which provided the first break in the monotony of winter. On a comfortably mild Christmas Day old women and little children, the first to arrive in the main village square, sat in twos and threes waiting for the dancing to begin. Girls in their Sunday best, with necklaces of gold coins flashing in the sunlight, passed through the square and sang as they walked. They were bareheaded, since they could not yet wear the married women's head kerchief. As they drew closer, the blotches of rouge, the tremendous earrings, belts laden with clinking silver pieces, and heavy bracelets showed that the girls considered this no ordinary holiday. They formed a line, side by side, and began the dance after persuading the gypsy musicians to strike up a tune; one by one the boys who had come out of the taverns joined the moving line: one step to the right, one step to the left, then three steps to the right, kicking high as they stepped. As the dancing progressed, many married women participated, while the married men looked on with condescending interest. The little children, dressed like miniature adults, gathered on the fringes of the crowd to imitate the dancers. Gossiping groups formed, buzzed, and then dissolved to form anew.

A commotion arose in the center of the square as two young men fought over the cane which was carried by the leader of the *horo*. The leader was supposed to pay the musicians for the dances he led, in exchange for which he could direct the dancers in a serpentine movement, always in step with the music, so that they wound in and out with a "crack-the-whip" at every major bend of the line. To the peasant, the boisterous physical activity gives an exhilaration little else can induce. In fact, some of the "young blades" at this *horo* were so carried away with animal spirits that they performed six or seven steps

535 527 to the prescribed two or three, tiring themselves out to the plaudits of those close by.

To the old-timers, however, the modern version of the traditional dance was a sad commentary on the state of things. They thought the young people too soft. After I had been watching the *horo* for some time an old man hobbled up to me. I had seen him shaking his head and muttering to himself, so I asked him, "What do you think of it, *dedo*?" He grunted, "It's all right for the young people to have a little fun, but they aren't as strong as I used to be when I was young. I used to hoe corn, harvest wheat, and come back to dance all evening. The young people can't do that now. And I wasn't as healthy as my father used to be."

535 The village registrar, Bai Angel, told me why there had been a declining interest in the *hora,* especially those which used to occur around the neighborhood fountains. About seven o'clock the people used to go to the pasture to get their animals. If the animals were slow in coming, then the people danced the *horo* there in the fields. When the animals had been taken home, and after the girls had finished up their housework, they went with jugs to one of the three fountains in the village and there danced again until eleven o'clock. In 1924 more fountains were installed in the village, thus tending to break up the larger groups which gathered around the three original fountains. The girls preferred to carry water from the fountains nearest their homes, and no longer attended the evening *horo.*

517 521 275 203 Tavern life was another, less colorful way of passing the bleak winter days. In the four ill-ventilated *kruchmi* the men gathered to discuss the harvest and to argue over the news read aloud from yesterday's newspaper. Some man sought his godfather, or the godfather of a recently christened son or daughter, and invited him to have a drink of *rakiya* (plum brandy) or wine. Sometimes men who had completed a business deal drank to clinch it. Men who had been in the army together told the same tall tales of adventure over and over again, re-creating those experiences which lifted them for a while out of their limited village environment. There were seldom any fights, because the frequenters put an end to disagreements before they got

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The coming of the boys might or might not stop the work.[2] Quite
584 often the girls were able to accomplish a great deal in spite of the
574 boys, but usually the entertainment which began soon after the boys
883 arrived distracted the girls from their task. There was much singing.
533 Someone struck up an old ballad and others joined in. Then, after a few more ballads, someone ventured a popular song. I once asked a young woman whether she ever sang any modern songs (knowing well enough that she did). She replied:

"Yes, the Dragalevtsy girls know almost all the popular songs. They hear the boys singing them on the street or at *sedenki* and then ask some boy who is a relative to write down the words. If they see that the song is not appropriate, they will not sing it. They always learn the words of songs and never whistle or 'murmur' [hum]."

I wondered to what extent the patriotic songs in the school were replacing the folk songs. Here is what informants at one *sedenka* said:

"As soon as a girl leaves the school, she does not sing any of the songs learned in school, but starts singing again the old songs that she has learned from the old people. The boys, however, continue to sing the songs, chiefly military, learned in school."

No instrumental music was taught in the school, but the radio was beginning to have some effect on the peasants' choice of music. One man listened to the radio fifteen days, stopping almost all other activity, in order to get the words of a jazz song then popular. These he sang with great gusto to his admiring friends. Many of the young people were becoming ashamed of the old songs and told me that they were out of date. The new popular songs that they learned were contained in *Pesnopoiki* (songbooks) bought for a few cents on market days.

●[535] The singing of some particularly lively tune at the evening gath-
584 erings[2] might lead to folk dancing in which both the boys and the
883 girls took part.[A] The very foundations of the house seemed to shake as the feet shuffled in time to the music. Parlor games of various sorts, quite similar to those played at a rural church social in America, were frequently played at these *sedenki*. This meant that the girls laid aside their spinning entirely and what started out as a work-bee became entirely a social gathering.

[2 - I The "sedenka", or "spinning party". The Bulgarian part of an American pioneer cornhusking and quilting bee -- Analyst]
[A "sedenki." -- Analyst]

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Usually after midnight, the singing at the *sedenka* began to decrease in volume, conversation became dull, and the boys sensed that it was time to go. After their departure the hostess often served refreshments such as a soggy cheese pie *(banitsa)*, and the girls might or might not spend the night. The courting aspect of the gathering was emphasized by the fact that none of the married people of the household, except the mother of the girl acting as hostess, could be present. Even she was absent much of the time in some of the homes.

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It was at these *sedenki* that I collected a number of village proverbs, which were a real conversational aid to young people somewhat tongue-tied in mixed company.

"A kind word opens an iron gate."

"God gives but does not drive into the stall."

"A wet person is not afraid of rain."

"Listen much, speak little."

"Short are the legs of a lie."

"Stretch out your feet according to your quilt."

"I am telling your daughter so that daughter-in-law may hear [speaking indirectly]."

"After the rain, a raincape."

"Every pear has a stem."

"Give advice freely but not money."

"The thirsty carry water."

"A dog that barks much puts a wolf in the stall."

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Within recent years the *vecherinki* provided young people other means of getting acquainted. The purpose of a *vecherinka*, or evening entertainment in the schoolhouse, was not to get any work done, but to raise money for some worthy cause. The villagers bought tickets to a program of music or drama, provided by both imported and local talent. Auctions and lotteries were features of most *vecherinki*. After the program was over the people joined in dancing: first, for an hour or so, they danced the native *hora*, to be followed, when the old folks

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[A "sedenka" is a spinning party" – The Bulgarian counterpart of an American pioneer cornhusking and quilting bee... Analyst]

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went home, by village versions of western dances. It was a strange sensation on these occasions to see fifty young people trying to do the fox trot, when it was obvious that not more than five couples were experienced at it. But those who knew were patient with the novices. The excited faces were flushed not with the interest in learning a new step but rather with the daring of the dance's embrace. I asked quite a few of my acquaintances how they felt about these dances. Most of the older people who had seen the modern dances and many of the younger people considered them very immoral. In the words of one of these conservatives, "The boys especially are eager to learn a modern dance so that they can do very immoral things, which are very sweet for the young."

Although these evening entertainments had less importance in the social life of the people than the *sedenki* or the promenade, the villagers were proud of them as a formal medium of recreation in imitation of what one would find in a city. It was a new experience for many men to buy a ticket and be shown a seat; and such new experiences were dear to a peasant heart if they did not take him too far away from the ordinary world in which he moved. The first *vecherinka* was given in 1925. The teachers after that tried to give one or two more, but no one attended, so the practice was discontinued. In 1930, however, the *Chitalishte* (Reading Room Association) started them again, with the result that in the following years four or five were held during a winter.

Another innovation which played an important part in Dragalevtsy courtship was the Sunday afternoon promenade, which had displaced the traditional Sunday *horo*. The promenade course extended from Renaissance Square up a rocky street which bends to the left for a quarter of a mile. Here the young people in their Sunday best turned about and retraced their steps to the Square. One reason for the popularity of the promenade was its modernity; another was the absence of a church ban against it during Lent in contrast to the traditional interruption of *hora* during that seven-week period.

Even in the promenade there was no pairing off except in the case of some engaged couple. Indeed, walking in a twosome was tantamount to announcing an engagement. So village boys in twos,

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585 were busily preparing the big meal to be served after the church ceremony every now and then rushed out with something for me to taste, with the groom's father insisting that I sample some of the choice wine or brandy purchased just for the wedding.

● 535 585 [184] The dance I had come to see did not begin until afternoon. It lacked the enthusiasm which I had learned to anticipate, but was nevertheless colorful: the girls and women wore their most beautiful costumes; the men were neatly dressed, some in army uniforms; the leader of the *horo* carried the Bulgarian flag of white, green, and red, taking care that it did not catch in the overhanging branches. (In time of war the colors are reversed with the red bar on top.) This dance really was the prelude to the gay procession which headed for the church about two-thirty. First came the musicians with their battered instruments; then the principals of the wedding, followed by the guests. The flag was there, as well as Bulgarian tricolor sashes over the shoulders of the men.

585 292 Ordinarily the bride was a gay figure in the procession, her somber black overdress brightened with huge silver belt buckles and cherished strings of thin gold coins handed down for generations from mother to daughter. Hair and face shining with cleanliness, she moved in her wedding procession, happy, although considerably confused by her prominent position. But this particular bride had no ornaments—(Had her parents refused to send them?)—except a flower over her ear and the usual short, coarse white veil on her head. She did have on real leather shoes, instead of the customary pigskin sandals, but that was the only elaboration of her costume. It was hard to get her to smile for her picture; but when her new brother and sister each took an arm to encourage her, the broad, rather dull face suddenly lit up and a pair of beautiful dark eyes looked shyly at my camera.

585 All the village turned out to see the procession pass. Swarms of children came racing down the principal streets at the sound of the music. Once we had entered the churchyard I learned that they were there to scramble for the candy and coins which were thrown in the air along with rice to symbolize sweetness, wealth, and productivity. But this came at the end of the ceremony, and the children stood